

McALPIN THROUGH THE YEARS  
by  
McALPIN 4-H CLUB AND WILLIE H. HAAS

The McAlpin 4-H Club has been doing Community Pride projects for several years now and the community is a better place in which to live because of their efforts. Chevron Corporation has provided "seed" money for most of the projects.

This year, 1985, we decided to write the history of our community. Chevron gave us fifty dollars to help.

We wanted to learn all we could about the people and their contributions to the growth, and non-growth of the town.

Club members were assigned the names of the oldest members of the families that have been here all their lives. Several of these people are in their eighties, so they know first hand much of the happenings. Their parents were children of the first settlers, so they have the benefit of information that was handed down to them by their parents.

Assignments were also made for churches, schools, post office, railroads, etc. Much of the information is available through public records.

We will be dealing with the area within the limits of McAlpin which we have set at about one-half mile from the post office in all directions.

There will be some mention of people outside the area since all the people for miles around were considered a part of the community and have had an influence on it.

When settlers first came to the area, it was a huge pine forest. Trees were so plentiful that only the choice ones were used for building homes for the settlers. The other parts of the logs were hewn off and the heart (center) was used for building material. No wonder they held up so well. If they caught fire, they were a lost cause, as the turpentine burned like fuel!

Saw mills and turpentine stills were the leading industries and added much to the economy.

The demand for lumber to build homes and barns was extensive after the land had been cleared so that crops could be grown.

The first houses were the typical log cabin homes. Some were the one room style, others were "double pen" type. This kind was two large log pens with a wide open hall dividing them. The kitchen was usually a separate log room which was set back away from the main building with a "walk way" connecting it to the house.

After saw mills moved into the area, more modern houses were built. The young families were growing and more room was needed. If a man could buy nails to put the house together, he had all he

needed to build a house. The huge logs were cut and hewed for the sills and blocks. Boards for the walls and floors could be planed by hand and shingles for the roof were split with an axe and froe. Doors and windows were made of boards and hung with hinges. Brick chimneys were a luxury that the more affluent could afford. Many chimneys were "stick and clay". Large sticks of wood were stacked and wet clay used as daubing to fill the cracks. Spanish moss was added to the clay mixture to make it hold together. This same method was used later on when the first tobacco barns were built. Fireplaces were the only means for heat in the homes so wood to burn was one of the essentials, not to say a way to keep the children out of trouble. Keeping the wood boxes filled was a never ending chore for the children.

Yards were kept free of weeds and grass. This necessitated lots of yard sweeping. Brooms made of large chinquapin bushes were used to sweep the leaves and trash from the bare ground.

Most yards had a few hardy blooming shrubs. Roses that required little attention were a small cluster type of red and a larger bush of a delicate pink and could be found in most yards. Bridal wreath (spirea), cape-jasmine, and four-o'clocks were also popular flowers.

With the coming of the railroad there was another need for wood from the pine forests. Cross ties for the roads and wood for the wood burning train engines was in great demand.

Schools and other public buildings bought their wood from local land owners.

The turpentine industry was a sticky one but one that employed many hands. The trees had to be chipped (the bark cut away from a section of the lower tree trunk) cups attached to catch the gum, and the gum (sap) dipped periodically. The turpentine woodsmen removed the gum from the cups and put it in a bucket until the bucket was full, then it was emptied into wooden barrels and hauled by wagon to the "still" where it was transformed into turpentine and resin. This practice continued into the early twenties. By then most of the virgin pines had been cut and the land cleared for agricultural purposes.

Second growth trees in wooded areas were a source of wood products until the middle of the century.

Because of the expansion of farming and the need for home sites, there isn't much wood land for trees to grow and reseed.

However, with the decline in acreage being planted to crops, there is much abandoned land that has been and is being planted in pines. Suwannee County may again become a Primeval Forest.

## TOWN OF McALPIN

The town of McAlpin was said to be settled in 1882. Actually, I believe that is when it was named. There were people living there before this date, I'm sure. The establishment of the post office in 1883 and the railroad in 1884 lead me to believe that there had to be people living there before this date. I know two families that moved into the community although not in McAlpin town or village in 1885. There were others here when they came.

Naval stores and cotton were the principal sources of employment. Live Oak was the nearest express and telegraph station and Lake City the nearest bank.

Early records list two stores and a school. Land sold for \$2.50 to \$10.00 per acre.

Business people living in McAlpin in 1886 were: Miss Mary E. Bailey, teacher; A. J. Brinson, grist mill and cotton gin operator; W. H. Brown & Son, general merchandiser; C. K. Dutton, turpentine farmer; W. B. Reid, general merchandiser; J. E. Roberts, general merchandiser, postmaster and station agent.

The population was about 30.

### POST OFFICE Established March 26, 1883

Most records report that McAlpin was settled in 1882, but I'm sure there were a few people there before then, as has been noted.

The first postmaster was appointed March 26, 1883. His name was Francis M. Kight and he served until August 7 of the same year when John N. Altman was appointed. Mr. Altman served until August 21, 1885, when James E. Roberts replaced him. Mr. Altman was appointed again August 13, 1889. Charles H. Brown became postmaster on August 5, 1893, and served until May 10, 1900. Early B. Gardner took over the job on May 10, 1900, and served until August 9. William H. Starling was appointed to succeed Mr. Gardner and served until his death on June 4, 1907. A cousin, Raymond Starling, filled in from June 4 of that year until August 8, 1908. Sallie Starling, who was 7½ months pregnant when her husband died, was appointed to the job on April 8, 1908. She was reappointed in July when she married Bob Sessions and served until April of 1910. Jacob C. Brock then served from April 22, 1910, until December 2, 1916, when William B. Goff took over. Mrs. Eula Fletcher has the distinction of having been postmistress the longest of all. She was appointed August 16, 1918, and retired after 44 years November 9, 1962. Oleta Avery became acting postmaster when "Miss Eula" retired and was replaced with Geraldine Vann November 8, 1963. Mrs. Vann is still the postmistress.

The post office was in one corner of a local store until 1952. Most postmasters were also a storekeeper. In 1952, a room was added on to a store built by Daune Gaston. The store building where the

post office had been housed had burned and temporary quarters had been in the voting house.

The mail was brought in by train until passenger trains were discontinued and then by truck, as it is today.

The postmaster had to "hand out" the mail to all patrons as there were no boxes that opened on the outside as they do today. When the present post office was built the more modern boxes which could be opened from the outside by dialing the combination were installed. This was a great help, as "store business" came first. If one happened to go for the mail when there was a customer to be waited on in the store, the mail could wait. Also when the mail was being sorted and put up, the post office window would be closed and one would have to wait to get the mail.

Mrs. Fletcher's step-son, Mannie Fletcher, was her assistant and many long time residents have memories of being fascinated watching the mail car postal workers retrieve the mail bag by using a "walking stick" like a cane to take the mail sack (a large canvas bag) from the hands of Mannie as he stood by the railroad track as the train went by. If there were no passengers to get on or off, the train didn't stop at McAlpin. Then, I believe, a mail car was used for awhile after passenger service was discontinued.

In 1961 the Pinemount post office and the rural route out of there was closed and people of the area began being served by a route out of McAlpin office and Live Oak.

Mr. Russell Goff was carrier at that time and continued to serve until his retirement in June 1961. Besides bringing the news of the outside world to the remote areas of the community, Mr. Russell was a good friend of all his patrons. In the early days he'd fill orders for groceries and farm supplies and deliver them on his route. He was honored by the community at a special celebration in his honor when he finally retired.

Mr. Goff's son, Malcolm, was the next carrier. He was well liked as he also did a good job although he didn't last as long as his father. He retired in 1980.

Gary Avery is presently carrying the mail. He took over in 1980. He had former experience with the postal service in Gainesville.

Although there was some talk of closing the McAlpin post office a year or so ago, it seems that the area is growing so that it may be necessary to enlarge the post office and add another rural route.

People of the area are dreaming of the time when they'll have a modern post office building like most other small towns.

Post offices that were close by in the community, but have long since been closed were: Pinemount, about two miles north of McAlpin;

Leona, to the east and Emerson, south about half way between McAlpin and O'Brien.

Those communities are now served by rural routes out of Live Oak, McAlpin and O'Brien.

Assistants to the postmasters have been: Mannie Fletcher 1918-1940; J. M. Fletcher, 1940-1941; Celestia Fletcher, 1942-1944; Geraldine Vann 1944-1945; Oleta Avery 1945-1962; Helen Avery 1962-1963; Oleta Avery 1963-1974; James Allen 1974-1975; at this time assistant became known as POA (Postal Operator Assistants). Sharon Bond, January 1975-September 1975; Oleta Avery, November 1975-April-1976; Linda Webb, April 1976 presently serving.

Malcolm Goff was his father, Russell Goff's, substitute carrier when the rural route was started at McAlpin. He took over his father's job in 1961. Geraldine Vann was the substitute carrier from July 1961 - November 1963. Daune Gaston served in this capacity from 1963-1980. Gerald Keen became the substitute in 1980 and served until 1985 when he left to become a carrier. Richard Mercer served only three months in 1985. He was succeeded by A. G. (Lyn) Whitman who is the present substitute carrier.

The status of the post office has shifted back and forth from 4th class to 3rd class until 1974 when it became 3rd class. It has remained 3rd class until the present time. 58 families receive their mail through post office boxes now. There are 407 families on the rural route, many however are outside the McAlpin community.

#### RAILROADS

The railroad, sea island cotton and pine trees are largely responsible for the growth of McAlpin.

The Savannah, Florida and Eastern Railroad was built in 1884. The name has changed several times during the past hundred years. The last time being when the Atlantic Coast Line merged with the Seaboard Railway.

The construction of the railroad was a tremendous undertaking. All the labor was manual, so many hands were required to lay the tracks. Keeping the tracks in shape kept many people employed.

There was a section foreman and five or six; sometimes more, other men employed to take care of the day-to-day upkeep of the railroad. Each crew had a section of the track, eight or ten miles, that was their responsibility. A section house was provided for the foreman and three smaller, 2 room, houses for the laborers.

The foreman's house was on the east side of the railroad on the site of the present Advent pastorium. The other houses were west of the tracks where the seed and fertilizer plant now stands.

A small storage house and commissary were near the tracks

between the two sets of houses. The motor ear which was used to carry the men to work was stored there. Staple food items which were sold to the laborers were kept there too.

Although we don't have a complete list of section foreman, we do know many of them. Mr. Bethel Bellamy, Vera Boyette's father, was one in the early years of this century. Mrs. Boyette was born in the section house. She moved with the family to Jacksonville where she grew up and raised her family. Then she moved with her husband, Pete, back to the area when they retired. She has fond memories of playing with the little black children who lived in the houses across the tracks.

Most of the laborers were large black men. Driving spikes and lifting rails and cross-ties required strong arms and backs.

Mr. Thrift was foreman during and right after the first world war. Mr. Petty came later, then Mr. Mears and Lloyd Lease. Percy Bass was the last section foreman to work out of McAlpin.

As more sophisticated equipment was put into use, fewer men could do the work of keeping the roads in condition, so some section foreman were cut out and their sections added to those that were left. When the McAlpin headquarters was discontinued Percy went to Live Oak where he worked until his death.

The early trains required water and wood to keep them going and McAlpin was one of the places where the trains could replenish their supply. There was a water tank and piles of wood beside the track in the center of "town." Later coal was used in place of wood, but the water tank and pump house had their place in the operation of the trains until the tank burned in 1930. It was quite an unusual incident, since this happened during a summer shower. The tank was made of wood, but the motor that operated the pump was run with fuel and the whole area was oily. There was no fire protection, so there was no way to put out the fire once it started.

Climbing to the top of the water tank was a daring feat for the youngsters of the area. It was also a favorite site for picture taking. Young ladies could position themselves on the ladder and pose for pictures.

There was one other site connected to the railroad. The Depot was a large wooden building on the east side of the tracks just south of the crossing. The building housed the passenger waiting room, ticket office, telegraph office and freight room. A wide open platform extended to the west and south. This large porch was a great place for small kids to run and play if the station master didn't chase them away.

The station master conducted all the business which included sending and receiving freight, sending and receiving messages by telegraph, selling tickets to train passengers and keeping up the premises.

After passenger trains were discontinued the depot was torn down and a small building put in its place. No one stayed there, however.

Besides the freight trains that came through, there was a "local" which came from the south early in the morning and came back from the north about five p.m. This train had a passenger coach on the back and was the main means of transportation for those who had business in Live Oak.

The passenger train which brought the mail and carried passengers came through twice a day also. Once going north and once going south.

The automobile and paved roads made the need for the services offered by the railroad unnecessary. Now we have mile long freight trains coming through, but few ever stop except occasionally a load of fertilizer may be switched over to the Central States establishment.

Through the years bales of cotton, cars of watermelons and loads of pulp wood and other wood products have been moved out of McAlpin by train.

Before the no fence law was passed, in the 1930's, livestock was free to roam the woods and roads. If a train ran over an animal and killed it, the railroad company was liable and had to pay the owner the value of the animal. Section foreman kept application forms which the owner could fill out and send to the headquarters. The section foreman would have to verify that the animal was killed by a train, but the owner would set the price or value of the animal. Usually, the dead cow would be a prize milker, or the hog a fine brood animal!

#### CHURCHES METHODIST

Most of the older living residents of McAlpin attended Sunday school and church at the Methodist Church. The building was on the site of the present Baptist Church.

The exact date of the establishment of the church could not be determined. It seems to have been started around the turn of the century. It was disbanded about 1930 or earlier.

#### HOLINESS

The Holiness Church was of short duration also. It was adjoining the Connie Croft property in west McAlpin. It was established around the early part of the century and lasted until the 30's. The Gardeners, especially Mrs. Gardner, was a faithful member and worked very hard to keep the church going.

#### PINEMOUNT BAPTIST

The Pinemount Baptist Church was moved to the McAlpin site as was mentioned earlier. It is on the site of the old Methodist Church.

The three aforementioned churches are the only ones we know of in the town of McAlpin. There were several nearby churches; however.

McAlpin Advent Christian Church east of McAlpin was started in the early years of this century. It is said that a few men were sitting on a log in the woods and Frank Howard suggested that they build a church. The others thought it was a good idea, so they started sawing logs to build it. As the congregation grew the building was enlarged.

Services were held one weekend a month on Saturday morning, Saturday night, Sunday morning and Sunday night.

In 1950 the people decided to build a new church. The present brick structure was dedicated in 1954. The 50th anniversary was celebrated in the new church in 1955. Full time services began about the same time that the new church was completed.

Charter members were: Rev. O. L. Mattox, Rev. G. W. Green and wife, A. F. Batts and family, Matilda Green, Jim Longdale, Frank and Lisa Howard, J.J. Green and wife, Ruff Green and wife and Dan Clardy.

Pastors have been: Rev. O. L. Mattox, Rev. George Wiggins, Rev. G. W. Green, Rev. Phil Dowling, Rev. Gordon, Rev. P. E. Day, Rev. Arthur Bucknan, Rev. Ina Hart, Les Petit, Rev. William Nickerson, Rev. H. Z. Shephard, Rev. Ronald Schoolcroft and Rev. Leonard Boston.

#### PLEASANT HILL BAPTIST

This church which is about three miles southwest of McAlpin is perhaps the oldest one in the area. It was established in 1882.

C.K. Dutton and his wife, Alice, sold two acres of land for \$1.00 to the church. W. H. Hillhouse and Mr. Williams names are on the deed as trustees. The church building has been remodeled three times.

The early church believed in strict adherence to church decorum. In 1890 all members who did not attend church regularly were excluded from membership. They could be reinstated by asking to be put back on the roll and promising to attend church regularly. Many young ladies were dropped because of dancing.

There have been two robberies at the church, one in 1970 and another in the late 70's. Since then the church is locked.

Membership has fluctuated through the years. In 1890 there were 47 members. Presently, most members are senior citizens. It is the smallest church in the Baptist Association.

Rev. Glen Sumner has been pastor since 1970.

Other nearby churches were Leona Methodist (disbanded several years ago), Mt. Pisgah Baptist in the central community. It is still active.

Churches that no longer exist are: Ida Grove, Possum Trot and Emerson.



## SCHOOL

McAlpin's first school (1882) was a one room wood frame building in the southwest corner of McAlpin just behind and a little to the south of the Central States plant. The building was moved from the original site to its present site about one fourth mile north of the first site. Rooms and porches have been added and it has been used for a home through the years. The present owner, Mr. Daniel Clark says it is still in good condition. The lumber is fat lighter.

Around 1915 the school was consolidated with Pinemount and a new building built about half way between Pinemount and McAlpin just north of Malcom Goff's house. The original building had three or four rooms, but by the time the building was abandoned, there were six rooms. The school was called Pinemount-McAlpin for many years.

There were no lights or bathrooms. Eight grades were taught, and graduations were gala affairs. The girls wore white organdy dresses and the boys blue serge suits.

At the end of the school year all grades took part in a stage program. The higher grades would act out plays and the lower grades would sing and perform skits or give recitations.

All during the year each room put on programs for all to see. All grades assembled for the daily devotion and sing. Songs like "In the Gloaming," "Darling Nellie Gray" and "My Ole Kentucky Home" were sung at assembly.

Basketball and baseball were competitive sports. Games with other schools in the county were played during the season.

Everybody walked to school, unless they were fortunate enough to have a horse to ride. A special place to hitch the horses were just off the school grounds. The railroad was the best road for walking. The wagon roads were sandy and hard to walk on.

In the early twenties Mr. "Deaf" John Green was hired to haul the students who lived east of McAlpin. He used a large two horse wagon to transport them.

By 1925 smaller schools, Emerson and Middleton, were brought to McAlpin. This was when buses first began to be used. The vehicles were owned by the driver, and were actually built by him. The driver would buy the stripped down truck, then he'd build a box like place for students to ride. Seats were wide boards down each side and in the middle of the bus. Metal roofs covered the top, and an opening down each side was closed with curtains of oil cloth when it rained or was cold.

By the mid-twenties grades nine and ten were being taught. Willie Hillhouse was the last 10th grader to graduate from McAlpin in 1929. In 1929 all above eighth grade were bused to Live Oak.

By the late 30's the W.P.A. was building schools and other public buildings all over the county. The last McAlpin school was built by this means just east of McAlpin. The building was built of concrete and had six large classrooms, an auditorium, offices, lunchroom, kitchen and bathrooms.

The building was damaged by fire during the first year it was used and again the next year. The insurance company then required that an attendant be there at all times. One room was then used as living quarters for the janitor and caretaker to live in so that the building could be insured.

Soon after the school was built, warm lunches began being served. The first lunches were warm soup and milk. Later meals were made available to all students. Those who couldn't pay the 5 cents per meal could help the cooks (cut wood, serve and clean tables) or bring milk or other food products to pay for their meal. A quart of milk would pay for a meal. The PTA bought a cooler so that the milk could be cooled after it was boiled.

The school principal shopped for groceries and brought them to school. When surplus foods began to be distributed by the Department of Agriculture, these commodities helped to supplement the bought foods.

Aunt Maude Davis was head cook. She had Willie Prevatt and later Sarah Parker for helpers.

All during the 1950's there was talk of consolidating McAlpin with Live Oak and Branford. The community fought to keep the school, but the powers that be won out and the school was closed.

The superintendant of schools promised parents that they could send their children to either Branford or Live Oak. Most children who lived south of McAlpin and those from the central area chose to attend Branford. This practice continued until last year when boundary lines were set and students required to attend the school in their district.

I can't name all of the teachers who taught at the school, but think I should mention a few who taught for many years.

Miss Mary Bailey was teaching in 1886.

Mr. Marvin O'Hara was a long time principal. His wife, Ruby, also taught many years.

Mrs. Eddie Mobley was a first grade teacher during the 20's and 30's.

Mrs. Pearl Johnson also taught first grade for years. In fact, she was teaching when the school closed.

Mrs. Thekla Whitfield taught many years. She taught all her students to crochet.

Mrs. Ruth Fletcher was teaching when the school closed. She went on to Live Oak where she taught until she retired a few years ago.

Mrs. Eula Fletcher and Ina Gaston, Vera Hicks, Verna Brinson and Willie Haas also taught in the school.

After World War II pictures of the boys from the community who were killed during the war were hung in the front of the auditorium near the stage. They were: A.D. Coleman, Green Howard, Marvin Green, Joe Turner, Steve Skinner and J.P. Prevatt.

After staying vacant for many years, the school is now being used as a monastery for a religious group. The Monastery of the Apostles moved into the abandoned school building in 1972. It had been built in 1937 and was closed in 1967. Vandals had damaged the building so much that work had to be done to restore the building.

Five men were assigned to the project, and much work has been done on the building and grounds. An addition to the front of the building was made to house people who need a temporary place to stay.

Worship services are held for the public on Sunday. Some people come from 20-30 miles to attend services.

Plans are to eventually make the school into an old people's home. Nuns will care for them.

Two monks presently live in the monastery. The church is not a part of the Roman Catholic Church.

#### DOCTORS

In the early years, up until about 1920, McAlpin had a doctor living in or near the town. Offices were in the home of the doctor. When his services were needed someone had to go to the doctor's home and let him know who was sick and where to go. Horse and buggy was the means of transportation used. The doctor carried medication, so he could supply most of the drugs a patient might need.

There was a drug store, however, if additional medication was needed. The druggist was named Bullard.

There was a Dr. McLean, Dr. Blanton, and Dr. Harrell who served the area. There hasn't been a doctor in the community since about 1920.

#### ROADS

McAlpin residents, like other pioneer people, made roads to travel wherever they needed to go. If you drove over a trail with mule and wagon long enough a road would evolve. There would be two ruts where the wagon wheels ran and a beaten path inbetween where the animal walked. Roads that were traveled a lot soon became sandy which made hard pulling for the horses. So new roads would be made.

The east-west road through McAlpin was called the Lake City road. Since the nearest bank was in Lake City, when McAlpin was first settled, this was one of the main roads.

After the railroad was built, this provided right-of-way for a road along the railroad. There was a dirt road on each side of the

track. One could go to Live Oak or Branford by this route. Local residents maintained the roads in their community.

In 1921 Governor Hardee created a state road department. Convicts were used to keep up the roads for many years.

A clay road from Live Oak to Branford was built in the early part of the century. Automobiles were coming into use and the horse and wagon roads were not suitable for Model T's. The clay road was on the westside of the railroad right-of-way from Pinemount to Branford. It took about the same route as the present paved road from Live Oak to Henry Croft's place, from there it continued south about half a mile, then turned east and made its way into Pinemount where it turned south just before it reached the railroad.

Clay was dug from pits along the route of the road and spread on the roadbed. This helped the sand problem, but rainy weather presented another problem. It was not unusual for cars to get stuck in the mud. If a fellow lived near a "bog" and had a good team of horses or mules, he could pick up a little cash pulling cars out of the mud.

In 1925-26 the road was paved. It took a little different route, however. It curved toward the east at what is now the Croft place (Oliver Smith lived there then). It crossed the railroad at Pinemount and continued south on the east side of the railroad. Many years later the road was repaved and the overpass built south of Pinemount and the present route established. Many feet have been added to the width of the road as the vehicles that travel the road have increased in size and weight. The latest improvement to the road was repaving in 1985.

#### THE McALPIN FAMILY

Most people know that McAlpin was named for an influential citizen of the town, but few know much else about him.

Edith Ackley Sessions of Branford is a niece of Dan McAlpin. We are indebted to her for the authentic history of the family.

Daniel Nunn McAlpin born December 22, 1844, died April 1, 1894. He was married to Mary Wood April 18, 1875. They had seven children: Kate born in 1876. She married Burton Burk in 1892. Bessie, born August 31, 1878. Her husband was J. Frank Johnston whom she married in 1894. Flossie, born May 3, 1880. David Wiley Henry was her husband and Olga (Ollie) July 17, 1883, husband Harry Edward Barcus, married June 25, 1902. Joseph Malcom, born March 5, 1886, and married to Ida Pearson, June 19, 1913. Mary Elizabeth (Mamie) December 25, 1888, married Claude R. Brooks November 17, 1907. An infant daughter born April 23, 1891, and died May 3, 1891.

Mr. McAlpin was known to have been a station master after the railroad was built about 1882. He also had a cotton gin and other businesses in McAlpin. Evidently, he moved to "Live Oak in the late eighties. He owned "The Bulletin," a forerunner of the Suwannee Democrat newspaper, which he sold in 1887 when he became tax assessor. He bought the Bulletin again from Mr. Helvenston in 1891 or '92, but sold it after a few months when his health began to fail. He died in 1893 and is buried in the Live Oak Cemetery.

There is an interesting story about the McAlpin family. The family is one of the oldest ones in Scotland. It was started from a murdered clan chief named Alpine. The name Alpine, of course, means Alps or mountains. In the year 841 the clans were organized into the first centralized government under the fabulous Kenneth McAlpin, the first of a long line of reigning monarchs.

This line ruled the country until the death of Margaret in September of 1290.

Out of the McAlpin clan grew a number of names of famous Scotch clans (families) that had their origin in given names.

The family history dates back to 600 B.C. In the Gallic tongue spelled MacAilpein, which means clan or tribe from the Alps.

They migrated to Spain, Ireland and eventually to Scotland. The tribe carried a family heirloom, a stone called "Lia Fail", or stone of Destiny. It is said to be the stone Jacob (Gen. 28:18) used as a pillow at Padaron and which he set up at Bethel. The stone has been traced to the Biblical tribe of Dan. Iber is said to have carried the stone to Ireland in 580 B.C. Kings were crowned sitting on or above the stone. Kenneth McAlpin, first Scottish king, took the stone to Scotland when he migrated there.

The stone stayed in the possession of Scottish kings at Scone until 1296. After England conquered Scotland and Edward I moved the stone to Westminster Abbey where it is today. English kings and queens are still being crowned sitting upon the stone. Queen Elizabeth II, the present queen being the latest.

The latter part of the seventeenth century three McAlpin brothers came to America from Scotland. They were recruited to support the governor of North Carolina just before the American Revolution.

There is no record of their having entered the country. The fact is that they were considered outlaws and could not legally enter this country. They were smuggled into the country.

After the defeat in 1746 of Scotland by England, a law was passed requiring all citizens to sign a pledge not to take up arms against the English crown or to wear Scottish kilts. All who refused were considered outlaws. Thus the trek to America. The prefix Mac was dropped from their name after arrival in America.

In 1857 Malcolm McAlpin and his wife, Margaret McArthur, moved with their family to Lafayette county near Brewer Lake, later to Pickett Lake. He fought in the Confederate Army in 1861. He served one year and died in 1870.

Daniel was Malcolm's son, he was a captain in the Confederate Army and served in Virginia.

Daniel McAlpin probably moved to McAlpin after his father's death in 1870. In 1875 he became a representative to the Florida legislature from Suwannee County.

Mrs. Sessions says that one of her aunts, Daniel McAlpin's sister, told her that the McAlpin home was on the east side of the railroad. The house is no longer there. She thinks it was where the Starling family lived.

Harriet McAlpin Ackley was Daniel McAlpin's sister and grandmother of Edith Ackley Sessions. Edith gave the Suwannee County Museum a quilt that Harriet made for her father and mother about a hundred years ago. The material used to make the quilt was from cotton grown on the farm in McAlpin.

#### STARLING FAMILY

William Henry Starling and his wife, Sallie Colson, moved to McAlpin from Culpepper, Georgia, about 1897. Their son, Willie, and two other infant children, who died, were born in Georgia. Willie died when he was eight years old. Five other children were born in McAlpin. Evelyn who married Tom Sessions and spent her entire life in and around McAlpin. The last home she maintained was the original McAlpin school which had been moved to its present site and made into a dwelling house. Evelyn's children were: Edna (married Bill Mobley). Their children are: Patricia, Mernith, Sandra and Billie. Mernith and Billie moved away when they grew up. Sandra married Ernest Hart, they presently reside near McAlpin. Patricia married Junior Jerkins and lives in the Friendship community.

Estelle married Edwin Kicklighter. They moved away and were finally divorced. She married Fletcher Brannen. They moved to McAlpin and lived here several years after retiring. Fletcher died a year or so ago and Estelle lives with her daughter near Tampa. We are indebted to Estelle for much of the information in this history. She was born in 1900 so is perhaps the oldest living person who was born in McAlpin. Her mind is keen and her memory good.

Fred left McAlpin to follow his chosen profession, telegraph operator. He and his wife Annie lived in Tampa and worked for Western Union.

Herbert was also a telegraph operator. He spent most of his life in Quincy, Florida. He and his wife, Effie, moved to Live Oak when he retired. Effie died there, and Herbert married Zelia Taughtry Howell, a girl he had dated when they were teenagers in McAlpin.

Willie (named for her brother who died) was born a few weeks after her father's death. She, like Mrs. Dell Sumner, doctored babies with thrash by blowing in their mouths. Willie married Haskell Prevatt and they have spent their life in and near McAlpin. They have four children. None live here. Their daughter, Wahletka, married Richard Bryen and lives in Orange Park. Lamar, and Wendell live in Jacksonville and Marvin in Orlando.

The Starlings lived in a house they bought from Charlie Brown, and which earlier belonged to Dan McAlpin. They owned most of the land on the east side of the railroad and some business property on the west side. Mr. Starling owned a store, grits mill and cotton gin.

In 1907 Mr. Starling was shot and killed as he was walking down the railroad toward a sawmill which was south of the depot. Someone inside the depot aimed a shotgun loaded with buckshot through a crack in the door and shot him. Everybody believed that Will Jenkins, who had a blacksmith shop near the Starling store, did the shooting, but since no one actually saw the incident, nothing ever came of it. Mrs. Starling was sitting in a rocking chair on the porch of their store and saw her husband walking down the track, heard gun shots then couldn't see her husband. He had been killed instantly. He had his pocket knife and a plug of tobacco in his hand with a chew half cut off. There had been an argument between Jenkins and Starling and Jenkins had shot him with bird-shot earlier. Neighbors reported seeing Jenkins run from the depot area about the time of the shooting.

Mr. Starling's cousin, Raymond Starling, was appointed postmaster after Henry's death and before Sallie's baby (Willie) was born. Sallie became postmistress after the baby was a few months old. She later married Bob Sessions, Tom later married her daughter, Evelyn. Bob and Tom's father was married to Sallie's mother, Nancy Carter. Bob and Sallie never had any children. Bob was a very short man and quite large, especially around his middle. Kids called him "Bobby Short".

After Bob's and Sallie's death the farm was sold to Burton Fletcher and the business property to several different people.

#### THE GOFF FAMILY

W. G. Goff (Kana) and a brother came to the McAlpin area about the time that the area was being settled. The brother returned to Virginia, but Kana married Susan Hawkins and settled on what is known as the John Goff Farm. In 1914 he built their house in McAlpin and swapped the farm for one owned by his eldest son, John. John moved his family from the Wylton Gaston place to his father's home place. Kana had a store in McAlpin and ran the farm with share croppers. Later Will Goff settled on a portion of the original farm.

Kana and Susan's children were daughters Alice, Bessie, Della and Pearl. The sons were John, Will and Raleigh.

Raleigh died of strychnine poisoning at age 20. He was attending normal school in Madison and got sick with a bad headache. His roommate gave him the poison thinking it was aspirin.

John married Rosa Vann. They raised eight children; Sadie, Abby, Howard, Irvin, Wilmer, John D., Helen and Leonard.

Sadie married Marion Greek and raised her family in McAlpin. Marion was a mechanic and had a shop in McAlpin and later in a building near his home in the northern part of the town. Sadie worked in the Live Oak school cafeteria several years after Marion died.

Abby married Martin Croft. She lived in McAlpin several years, but spent most of her married life in South Florida. She also raised a large family, several of which live in the area.

Helen married A.W. Law and has spent her life in the Wellborn area. All three girls are widows.

Howard married Edna Crews and lived, until his retirement, on a farm northwest of McAlpin. He moved to Live Oak where he lived until his death.

Irvin drove a school bus while attending high school. He moved to Jacksonville where he was a carpenter. He built the Pinemount Baptist Church. His wife was Frances.

Wilmer married Odessa Law. They lived in Suwannee County several years, but later moved to south Florida.

John D. married Ruby Gill. They bought the Will Goff farm and later the Brock farm which he operated until his death. His son, Jerry, and wife Rita presently run the farm. Their two children, Alton and Jennifer, are active 4-H club members in the McAlpin club. Ruby and John D.'s other children are: Johnny and Lavelle who live in Jacksonville as does their daughter, Mary Ann. Gary lives in Virginia and works in Washington, D.C.

Leonard brought his wife, Mary, home when he came back from fighting the war in the 40's. Mary was a California girl who never could get used to the farm life. They left the farm they had bought and operated for several years and went back to California. He died several years ago.

John Goff married Meda Altman, an old maid school teacher, after the death of his wife Rosa around 1930.

Will Goff and his wife, Julia, lived on the farm until the automobile came on the scene. He was the rural mail carrier out of Pine Mount, so when the Model-T came on the market, he was ready to swap the horse-and-buggy for this mode of transportation.

After retiring from the mail carrying he opened a garage near the site of the Pine Mount Baptist Church. Later he built his home and a shop on the east side of the railroad.

Will's Model-T was the means of transportation for those having business in Live Oak. He'd, for a quarter a piece, take passengers to town. He'd try to get three or four passengers a trip to make a



profit. He also offered taxi service to strangers arriving by train.

Will and Julia's children are: Ira, Cleo, Gertrude, Juanita and W.H. and Sudie.

Ira operated the garage his daddy had founded. He later moved to Ocala. The other children left McAlpin too.

Alice the eldest daughter of Kana and Susan, married Emory Daughtry. She died after her 6th child was born. Her children were: Cordele, Gladys, Agnes, Zelia, Burma and Byron. Burma died when she was about 10 years old.

Bessie married Frank Green (no kin to "Grass" Green). They owned and operated a large store and farm in the northern part of McAlpin. They sold the farm to Mr. Frank Prevatt and John Crews about 1917. F.M. and Bessie both held county offices after moving to Live Oak. He was tax assessor and after his death, she held the office for several years.

Della married Alvin Coleman and moved to Jacksonville. She brought her two small sons home after her divorce from her husband in the 30's. They lived with her mother, her father had died, and stayed on after her death. "Miss Della" was a devoted member of the Church of God. She was also a piano teacher, and taught most of the students in the area.

Della's youngest son, A.D. was lost in action in one of the American aircrafts during the second World War.

Theron, had tuberculosis as a teenager. He went to Arizona and finally, after lung surgery, recovered enough to lead a normal life for several years. He lived in Jacksonville with his wife and two daughters. After separation from his wife, he and one daughter, Susan, came to live with his mother. When "Miss Della" became disabled, he took care of her until her death.

Theron later married Nelda. They had one daughter, Hilda. Theron died and is buried beside his mother in the McAlpin cemetery.

Pearl married, Ponce Sandlin. They lived in McAlpin for a while, but later moved away.

#### GASTON

William Alexander Gaston and his wife, Mattie Bass, came to the McAlpin area from Quincy, Florida, in 1905. They took over a homestead tract of 160 acres south of McAlpin in what was then known as the Emerson Community. The farm was later known as the Vines place, and more recently, the Melvin Boswell place. They grew cotton, operated a saw mill and had a machine shop on the place.

Farm help was Bill and Aunt Duck Wiggins who had been slaves of Mr. Wiggins. They chose to stay on the farm after they were freed and took the name of their owner.

The Gaston's sold the farm in 1919 and moved to the farm that is presently owned by Vanice Prevatt. They later moved to the

Hughes farm where they operated a grist mill and had a small store. Mr. Gaston always operated a repair shop wherever he lived. He was self-taught. If he ever saw anyone repair an implement or piece of machinery, he could do it himself just from watching one time.

During the 20's the family moved to the McCorvey (later known as the Gray place) near McAlpin. Mrs. Gaston operated a store in McAlpin during the late twenties. The store was at the site of the present post office.

Mr. Gaston died in 1930. The family then moved to the farm where Wylton and Ina Gaston lived for many years. Wylton was the only one of the twelve children to make McAlpin their home.

The children were: Caryle(Carl) who married Mae Vann and fathered four children (Carris, Nina, Bill and Daune). They were divorced and he moved away and she stayed here.; Bertram; Ernest; DeWitt; (he died when he was 21); Luther (fought in W.W. II). He was one of the first ones from the community to go overseas and the last one to come home; Russell drove the first school bus to McAlpin school; Wylton, Gladys, Irene; John F.; and W.A.

Present residents of McAlpin who are descendants of William A. and Mattie Gaston are Nina Bass and her son, Connie Croft and Daune Gaston.

Daune and his wife, Lil were the last residents of the old McAlpin house. He bought the place which included the property where the post office now stands in 1946 from the Starling family. He built the post office and the adjoining store in 1952. In 1956 a tornado damaged the house so that they couldn't live there. He then built a house behind the store. After operating the store for about 20 years, he sold the store and property to Burt and Ruth Moore.

In 1965 Daune and Lil bought the Mannie and Celestia Fletcher home. Fire damaged the home so that it had to be rebuilt. In 1971 they built their present home.

Lil was a widow with two children; Annie and Terry, when she and Daune married. They also have one daughter, Melody. Terry was killed several years ago. Annie and Melody live outside the county.

Daune was substitute mail carrier from 1963-1980. He is retired and spends his time fishing and gardening.

#### GARDNERS

Early Bascom Gardner and his wife Lula Daughtry Gardner built a new house in McAlpin and moved from their farm to town in the early years of this century. They had lived on the farm where Vanice and Lula Mae Prevatt presently reside. Their house in McAlpin still stands and is occupied by Rev. Glen Sumner and his wife Marie.

Mr. Gardner served as postmaster for a few months at the turn of the century.

Mrs. Gardner was a charter member of the Holiness Church which was established on the site of the present property of Connie Croft. The church was built about 1910 and continued until around 1930.

The Gardners had eleven children: Namely, Bertie, Mae, John, Willie, Maude, Pearl, Thetus, Bob, Brown, Ola (died at age 2 years) and Glen.

Maude Davis and Willie and his wife Beulah are best known to the people of the area, as they are the only two who resided in the area most of their lives.

Willie was slightly crippled and was referred to as "cripple Willie". He was in charge of the railroad pump when the water tank burned. He moved to a farm southwest of McAlpin after his job burned! He died several years ago, but his wife lives in Live Oak.

Maude was head cook in the lunchroom at the school and was noted for her good cooking. She lives in a house in Branford and although she is almost blind she still maintains her home. She will be 88 years old in August 1986. She attended school at Middleton and later at McAlpin.

Aunt Maude, as she was called, said that her father told them that he made beer out of sweet potatoes and sold it to the railroad workers when they were building the railroad.

Early had two brothers, Nate and Willie. Nate moved to south Florida. This story is told about him. It is said that when he crossed the Santa Fe river that is the boundary line of Suwannee County, he sat down and took off his shoes. When asked why he did this, he said "I'm pouring Suwannee County sand out of my shoes, and I don't expect to ever set foot on it again." He never did.

Uncle Willie is described by Maude as "mean". Cripple Willie was also a barber and was cutting hair in Will Goff's shop when the water tank burned.

#### BEMBRY'S

Mr. Jim Bembry and his wife Betty were early residents of McAlpin. They had the only two story house in McAlpin. It was west of the railroad in the northwest section of the village.

Mr. Bembry was the blacksmith and operated his shop as long as there was a need for his services.

Mrs. Bembry's father was Charles Brown. He ran a store and was postmaster. Not much is known about the Brown family except that one son moved to Tampa and became very wealthy. He used to visit families here in his limousine and uniformed chauffeur.

The Bembry's had two sons and two daughters.

"Sis" married John Green and spent her entire life on their farm near McAlpin.

"Sweet" died, supposedly from poisoning when a young woman. She was noted for her beauty.

Charlie's wife was named Zona. She left him with four small children: Gertrude, Y.C., H.M. and Dumpy. Dumpy died as a result of injuries received when she fell in a barn at Bob Sessions farm. The grandmother took care of them until Charlie remarried Ethel Jewel several years later. Charlie was in charge of the railroad pump that provided water for the trains for many years.

Bud left the area after he married. He was a section foreman and worked for the railroad.

It is said that the reason the three children had nicknames was that Mr. and Mrs. Bemby couldn't agree on a name for them so they waited until they were old enough to select a name for themselves.

#### LEGGETT

Louis Leggett and wife, Mattie, were pioneer settlers in McAlpin. He owned the southwest quarter of the land area of McAlpin. He also owned several businesses, all of which he disposed of by 1925.

Mr. Leggett, like Will Goff, bought a Model T Ford as soon as they were available. He could usually find enough men to fill his car when he needed to go to Live Oak. On one occasion in 1921 the car hit a stump and turned over with his load of riders. No one was hurt, except George Hillhouse. He suffered a broken arm. Dr. Bullard, the practicing physician at McAlpin, set the arm but it never healed properly and was crooked all his life.

The Leggett children, Edgar, Clinton, Robert and Grace, left the area and the elder Leggetts are buried at Pleasant Hill Church cemetery.

#### DEWITT HARRELL

The Harrell family, headed by Rev. Dewitt Harrell, lived in McAlpin during the latter part of the last century. He was a Methodist preacher. Cora Brock was his oldest daughter and he lived with her much of the time during his latter years.

One son, Byron, got his start as a telegraph operator in the station at McAlpin. He married Avie Lou Blanton, a local girl. He worked and raised his family in Jennings, Florida. He was nearly a hundred years old when he died two years ago.

Hermon, the other son, moved to Jacksonville where he still lives.

The other two Harrell children were girls, Donna and Lela. Both married railroad men and lived out their lives in the Valdosta area.

## BROCK

J. C. Brock and his wife, Cora Harrell, came to McAlpin in the early years of the century. They owned a farm that took in the northwest quarter of the land area of McAlpin. They also operated a general store on the corner at the railroad crossing on the west side.

Mr. Brock was postmaster from 1910-1916. The post office was in his store. The store burned when the other stores in the area burned. It was rebuilt.

Cora had her millinery shop in the backroom of the store.

Their children were: Estelle, Alonza and Lucile and a son who died when very young.

Estelle married Ashley Bennett who was a section foreman. She died when their daughter, Mary, was about a year old.

Alonza was a telegraph operator at McAlpin during the early twenties. He went on to south Florida where he died when he was about thirty.

Lucile still lives in Tampa where the family moved in 1923. Her husband was Ernie Erdmann.

J.C. died in 1929. Cora remarried and lived to be about 80. She married Leonard Albritton who preceded her in death.

## GREEN FAMILY

The Green family came to Florida from Barnwell, South Carolina, in 1853. They settled in the Starke area.

George Washington Green was born February 22, 1862. His wife, Sarah Elizabeth Wheeler was from Appleton, Georgia. She was born in 1864.

All of their 15 children were born near Benton, Florida, except the last one who was born at McAlpin in 1909. She lived only three days.

Mary Elizabeth (Liza) was born in 1880. She married Frances Marion Howard. The Howards settled on a farm adjoining her father's place in 1903. The Howards raised a large family, and both died on their farm.

Their children were: Ethel, married George O'Hara, Willard, married Mary L. Sheffield. Ethel and Willard were born at Benton. Sadie was born at Watertown. She died from an abscess caused from swallowing a peanut when one year old. Pauline was the first Howard

child born in Suwannee County. She married John Sanders. Frances Marion (F.M.) married Novice Tedder. He served in the Navy in World War II (1941-1959). Goff Ives's wife was Juliette Brannon. He was shot by a robber and killed in 1963 in Lake City. Verna Ruth married W. L. Coolidge. She is a widow now and spends her time in Lake City, Florida, and Balsam, N.C. Hazel Vivian is Mrs. T. J. Stewart. They live in Lake City. Marguerette died at age 11. Van Buren was killed in action in the Normandy invasion during World War II. Mary Elizabeth (Mary Beth) lives in Lake City with her husband, Walter C. Peterson, Jr.

John McCollister Green married Cornelia (Sis) Bemby. They had six children. Their first born was a son, Hoyt. He lived only one year. Olive was seven when she died. Gladys married J.W. Hayes. Both are deceased. They lived out their lives on a farm east of McAlpin. Forest Hayward still lives on his father's home site east of McAlpin. His three wives were: Geneva Floyd, Marjorie Godbold, and Mary Lee Boyd. Rena Catherine is the widow of Leo Dunham. She lives in Live Oak. Dorothy died in childbirth in 1942. Her husband was Alva Goss. John was known as "bearded John" to distinguish him from the other John Greens in the area. He was an avid woodsman and was a guide to out of town bird hunters who came to hunt during bird season. He was also a self-taught vet who was the person local farmers called to castrate and spay hogs.

George Franklin Green and his wife, Margaret Minerva Hardy, were the parents of twelve children. Their oldest child, Eustes Earl (Tootsie) was married to Maggie Gray. He was killed in a shipyard accident when he was sixty years old. Isla never married. She spent her working years working all over the world as a government employee. She died in 1986 at age 76. Ina Ferrell married Wylton Gaston and lived with him on their farm south of McAlpin until a few years ago when they moved to Advent Christian Village. Wylton died there. Ina taught in Suwannee County schools for forty years. She has been pianist for the McAlpin Advent Christian Church most of her life. She still attends the church there since moving to Dowling Park.

Clifton Woodrow's wife was Mary Fennell. He was a veteran of World War II and was wounded in action and received a purple heart. He and Mary were divorced after they had three children: Woody, who lives near McAlpin, Nanette and Jane. Clifton operated "Cliff's" store in McAlpin for several years. He lived on his farm about 2 1/2 miles south of McAlpin. He is deceased.

Marvin Elmer died of pneumonia while he was in the Coast Guard in World War II in 1945.

Elizabeth (Beth) married Willie Law and spent most of her life with him in Ft. Pierce, Florida. After Willie died, she moved to Dowling Park and built a home next door to Ina and Wylton and across the street from Isla. She later married Ralph Dodge and moved into his home nearby.

Wilmar Burton married Aleta Grice. They have never lived in the McAlpin area.

Margaret Ruth lived only seven months.

Daniel Bixler (Dan) was married to Florence Drake. He was in the Air Force in World War II where he received the Distinguished Flying Cross and three Oak Leaf Clusters.

Vivian was born while the Green's lived in Perrine, Florida. She married Robert Epperson and divorced. Later she married James Nolan. They live in Gainesville, Florida.

Norma Lovada married Charles Edward Stewart. They live in Lake City.

R.A. (Randolph Alva) married Reba Skinner. They are divorced, and he lives in Live Oak.

Mr. George Green had a nickname too. He was known in some circles as "Grass" Green. He was the first farmer in the area to practice soil conservation. He tested all new grasses and cover crops for the University of Florida.

The Green family moved to Dade County during the "boom" in the mid-twenties, but came back to McAlpin after the bad hurricane wiped him out in 1926. They lived for several years on the Hughes farm west of McAlpin, then on the farm adjoining the Advent Church. Later he moved to the old Mobley place joining Ina and Wylton Gaston's farm.

Frank died at home. His wife spent her last years at Advent Christian Village Dowling Park.

Elizabeth Green, the fourth child of Preacher Green, lived only four months. Her sister, Margaret Lee was stillborn January 12, 1888.

Matilda Samantha was born in 1889. She married John Vann in 1910. She died in 1918. They never lived in the immediate McAlpin area.

Clarence Davenport was born in 1891. His wife was Lillian Moore. He died in 1953.

The eighth child, Clemintina Ann Ardella "Tiny" married James William (Willie) Mobley in 1917. They lived on a farm adjoining the Preacher Green's farm on the south. They had two sons, Grant and Osborne. Grant has lived on a farm just north of the original Green place all his life. Osborne moved to Ocala soon after his marriage. "Tiny" died in 1932. Willie died several years later.

Noonan Jefferson 1896-1969, married Ozell Carver in 1922. Noonan was a veteran of W. W. I. He was "shell-shocked" during the war and was one of the first disabled veterans the people of McAlpin ever knew. Noonan spent most of his civilian life in Live Oak, but

visited the people in this area frequently. He and Ozell sold insurance to supplement his veteran's pension.

Ella Annette, the 10th child, born 1898 married John G. Vann in 1918. She later married Ralph Carson, and Barney Auten.

Nellie Alberta, 1899, had two husbands, Terrance Mobley and William O. Weeks.

Leon Adolph, 1903, was married to Helen Sikes. He never lived in the area after he grew up.

The 13th and 14th children were both girls and were never named. One of the stillborn infants was born in 1905 and the other in 1907.

Violet Ruth, the only child born in McAlpin, was born in 1908. She lived only three days.

Preacher Green owned 600 acres just east of McAlpin. He had three or four sharecropper houses on the farm where families who worked for him lived.

Mr. Green was State Representative from Suwannee County and was instrumental in getting free textbooks for schools in Florida.

A monument was erected in Tallahassee in his honor for his part in introducing the Suwannee River Improvement Act.

His wife, Sarah Green, was killed by a train in McAlpin in 1917. She was tending to business in Mr. Brock's store on the west side of the tracks when a train approached the crossing. The horse which was hitched on the east side of the tracks started "raring" so she went to quiet it and caught her foot or stumbled and was run over by the train.

The preacher's second wife was Lilla Mae Thomas. She was seventeen years younger than he. They had one daughter, Edna Earle, who married Hamilton Monroe Nash and lives in Tallahassee.

The Green's sold the farm and moved to Live Oak in the mid-forties. He died in 1948 and "Miss Lilla" in 1955.

The Green's were charter members of the Advent Christian Church.

There were other Green families in the area. Some were cousins and others no kin or not close kin.

George and Jack Green raised their families near McAlpin. Others of the Green relatives lived in the central community.



## HILLHOUSE

Two Hamilton County men, John and Henry Hillhouse moved to the McAlpin area with their young families in 1885. They were decedents of Abraham and Janet Hillhouse who lived in Artikelly, County Derry, Ulster, Northern Ireland in the first half of the seventeenth century. Their estate was named "Free Hall". Their son Samuel Hillhouse moved to England and emigrated to Pennsylvania then to South Carolina by 1790. Samuel's son, William moved with him. William's son, Captain John Hillhouse, had a son, Samuel who married Annie Crownover and moved to Cherokee County Georgia. Their son John H. Hillhouse married Frances Thurmond and moved to Hamilton County Florida where he died in 1853. Frances Thurman married George W. Cooper, after his death. However, two of her sons, John and Henry Hillhouse are the two who settled in the McAlpin area.

William Henry was born in Georgia in 1845. He married Susan Gray after he moved to Hamilton County. He died in 1908. Both are buried in Pleasant Hill Cemetery. They were both charter members of Pleasant Hill Baptist Church.

Their farm was at the southern edge of what might be considered the city limits of McAlpin. They moved into a one room log house that was already on the property. There was no well for water so they had to haul water from a farm about five miles west of them until a well could be put down. There was very little cleared land, so this had to be done too.

They already had three sons, ages 5-10 years so it wasn't long before there was help to clear land and plant crops.

John who later married Annie Bell Whittle and fathered four children; Vera, Callie, Milton and Raleigh, spent all his life on his farm across the railroad from the family farm. Raleigh is deceased. Milton lives in Satellite Beach. Vera married Arthur Hicks. She lives near McAlpin. Callie married Dewey Fennell. She lives on a part of her father's farm.

William (Willie) never married and died in 1902.

George married Lela Brock in 1910. He died in 1946 and Lela in 1968. Their children are: Willie, Arnett, Mamie and Irene. A daughter, Susie Lee, was born in 1915 and died in 1917. Another girl was stillborn in 1926.

George and Lela also settled on a farm adjoining his father's on the east side, but bad health and the boll weevil caused them to sell the farm after two or three years. George opened a store with his brother John in McAlpin, but that was short lived too. George (his family called him "Bud") then moved his family to Grady County Georgia, Lela's home. Five years later, the family moved back to McAlpin. Then four years later in 1924 they moved to Hillsborough County near Plant City. After two years there they moved back to the farm he had previously acquired about three miles southwest of McAlpin. Here he spent the rest of his life. Their daughter, Millie, married Fred Haas. They lived on a portion of the family

farm. Fred died in 1983. Arnett lives in Live Oak, Mamie (Mrs. A.C. Toss) lives in Philadelphia community. Irene Voyles Cannon lives in Boca Raton.

Samuel Martin was the fourth son of Henry and Susan. He married Bessie Sauls when he was about forty and she sixteen. Their children are: Mildred, David, Lillian and Martin. They lost an infant son in 1920.

Sam lived with his mother on the home place until they sold it in the early 20's. He then bought a portion of John's farm where he lived until his death in 1942.

Henry and Susan had one daughter, Mamie. She married Toss Hamilton who owned the property that makes up the southeast one fourth of McAlpin. They had two children who both died within a few days of each other. Mamie died one day and one of the children died the next. Toss later married Sallie Sullivan. He was shot by Sallie's father, Bill Sullivan, and died from the wounds.

Joseph "Joe" the youngest son married Minnie Sauls who was an older sister of Bessie. He died in 1938 and left Minnie with six children to raise. Their children are: Henry (deceased), Frank, Samuel (Sammie), Susie, Hazel and J.B. None live in McAlpin. Sammie, Frank, and J.B. live in the county though. Sammie was a prisoner of war in Germany during the second World War.

#### THE FLETCHER FAMILY

In the early 1900's Jerry M. Fletcher moved to the central community, about six miles east of McAlpin, from Lowndes County, Georgia. His family consisted of his wife, Ida L. Sellers, a step-daughter, Ida B. Sellers, a daughter, Lura Copeland by a previous marriage, and four sons, Mannie, Burton, Dewey and Bobbie.

The reason Mr. Fletcher gave for the move was that land was cheaper in Florida than in Georgia. Mr. Fletcher always kept a close watch on his pocket book! The family farmed there until about 1918.

Ida died in 1916 and in 1917 Mr. Fletcher married Lula Perry, a school teacher, from the O'Brien community.

In 1918 they bought Mr. Adolph Dasher's store and moved to McAlpin. They lived in a house just north of the community center site for a short time, then purchased Mr. Lewis Leggett's farm and home. Both lived out their lives there. Their oldest daughter, Geraldine Vann and her husband, Pete, live there now.

"Miss Lula" as she was fondly called became post-mistress with a salary of \$300.00 a year. Mr. Fletcher's son, Mannie, was assistant postmaster so he took care of it during the day and "Miss Lula" took over after school. The post office brought customers into the store, so it was really an asset.

Besides running the store, the Fletchers ran a successful farming operation with share croppers. Watermelons were their specialty. They would provide seed and fertilizer and farmers would produce the melons on halves.

Mrs. Fletcher taught school until her children came along, then again, during the war she was given special permission by the post office department to teach a few years. She was always working for some cause that would benefit the community and her family.

The new school was a real challenge to her. She worked to beautify the grounds and to provide lunchroom facilities.

One of her greatest contributions to the whole county was her efforts to bring electricity to the rural areas. She put her children in the back of her car and drove from house to house trying to get people to sign up and pay a \$5.00 membership fee so that REA could bring electricity to their home. When power was ready to be turned on her home was the first one in the county to be energized. She served as secretary to the Board of Directors of Huwantee Valley Electric Cooperative for many years.

Mrs. Fletcher was a good cook which probably accounted for the fact that she and Mr. Fletcher were over weight.

For many years bird hunters from New York boarded in the Fletcher home during the winter.

She retired from the post office in 1962 after having served for 44 years.

Before she retired the community honored her with a special event known as "Miss Eula Day". All the local residents turned out to pay her homage.

Miss Eula loved children and had a deep desire to have a family even though Mr. Fletcher was much older than she. Finally, in 1926 they had their first child. Geraldine, Ina Clare, and Wilda were the girls. Hal was the only son. Their last child was stillborn.

Mr. Fletcher's four older boys each had four children. Mannie and Celestia's were: M.L., Jr., Elizabeth, Kenneth and Glenda Lee. Mannie operated the business with his father until his health failed. He had Parkinson's disease and finally became unable to function as a person. He and Celestia moved to Live Oak where he died and where Celestia still lives.

Burton and Ethel's children are: Dorothy, Rudolph, Rufus and Leon. They bought Preacher Green's farm east of McAlpin in 1949 and lived there until he died.

The day Rudolph was born, Mrs. Eula took Dorothy, who was about two years old, to school while the boy was being born at home. Dorothy got a bottle that had had kerosene in it and probably drank some of it. Mrs. Eula cried and cried. She was afraid the child would die. She must not have swallowed much even though her mouth smelled of the stuff. Dorothy still lives! All of the boys have lived in the community until recently. Rudolph moved to Live Oak and Rufus moved out of the county.

Dewey married Ruth Blanton who was a long time teacher in the McAlpin school and later in Live Oak. Their children are: Margaret, Clyde, Frances and Lehman. Dewey operated his farm east of McAlpin until he retired. They moved to Live Oak.

Robbie and wife, Ota Goff, moved to California where their four children were born and grew up. They are: Roberta, Elton, Ota Lee and Sandra.

Mr. Fletcher retired in 1945. At that time his youngest son Hal took over the business. In 1946 Pete Vann who was married to Hal's sister, Geraldine, joined him. Pete's mother died when he was born and Mrs. Fletcher, who had no children at that time, tried to get Mr. Oscar Vann to let her adopt Pete. Mr. Vann wouldn't consent. When Geraldine and Pete were married Mrs. Fletcher said, "well, I tried for you as a son but got you for a son-in-law." Pete and Geraldine bought the family home and live there now. Pete is retired and Geraldine is postmistress. Their children are: Harry, Beverly and Fletcher. Beverly lives in McAlpin with her four children: Eric, Brian and twins, Kevin and Kristi Phillips.

Hal is married to Mary Elizabeth Howland. They live in Live Oak where he operates Howland's with his brother-in-law, Billie. Their children are: Terry, Tan and Hal Jr., Kim and Lynn.

Ina Clare's husband is Gene Weekly. They live in Athens, Georgia. They have four sons: Ken, Bruce, John and Tom and a daughter, Alice.

Hilda lives with her husband, Fred Glass, Jr. in Live Oak. Their children are Lawanna, Javita, Fred III and Thad.

Burton's youngest son, Leon is the only one of the family who is still farming in the McAlpin area. He has a farm about three miles east of McAlpin.

#### PREVATT-CREWS-AVERY

The population of McAlpin increased, nearly doubled, in 1918 when the Prevatt and Crews families and their brother-in-law, Harley Avery, moved there. All had been residents of Columbia County.

A. S. Prevatt and wife, Ida, and John (son) Crews and wife, Ella, bought the J. M. Green farm and business in the northern section of

McAlpin. The farm consisted of 600 acres of farmland, a store and five or six cropper houses. There was also a Masonic Lodge on the property adjoining the store. They operated the store for a short while then closed it and farmed the land together. Later the farm was divided with Crews getting the portion east of the railroad and a widowed sister-in-law, Jenny Prevatt, and her children the northern portion.

The J.M. Prevatt's lived in the main house west of the road and the Crew's in a nearby smaller house. When they moved across the tracks they enlarged and remodeled one of the cropper houses for their home. Many years later this house was badly damaged by a tornado and the present house built by Pasco Crews, one of the Crews sons.

Mr. Prevatt's wife Ida and Mrs. Crews were sisters. Harley very was their brother.

Mr. Prevatt's aged mother, Elizabeth, also lived with them and with Jenny Prevatt. In her later years (she lived to be 102) she made her home with A.A. and Colie Prevatt, one of the Prevatt boys.

The Prevatt children are: sons, Haskell, Colie, Brooks, Vanice and J.E. The girls are: Annie, Treaty and Neta. Haskell, Colie and Vanice still live in the area. Haskell's wife is Willie Starling. Colie married R.A. Howard. Vanice's wife is Eula Mae Vann. All drove school buses and operated the family farm until it was sold. They still live in the area.

Mr. Prevatt was county commissioner from the district from 1934-1936. Terms were two years each then. He served two terms.

Mrs. Crews died in 1922, but John lived the rest of his life on the farm. His son, Pasco and wife, Shelly, lived with him and maintained the home until Pasco's death. Their daughter and her husband, Eloise and Norman Paul, bought the place. A portion of the farm had previously been sold to Malcom Goff.

Other Crew's children were: Jessie, Sarah, Edna and Mamie and another son, Paul.

Sarah, who was married to Hazel Parker, still lives near McAlpin. She worked in the school lunchroom and operated her farm after her husband was killed. Her three daughters are: Jeanette Dill, married to Hugh Dill, Ella Mobley; husband Howard and Gloria.

Edna married Howard Goff and lived on their farm north of McAlpin until they retired. Howard died several years ago. She lives in Live Oak. Mamie married Elzie Jones. She spent most of her life in South Florida, but moved back to the county after retirement. Elzie died several years ago and she last year.

Paul joined the Navy and made a career there. He retired and makes his home in California.

Jenny Prevatt was John Crews sister. She was a widow with four children when they moved to McAlpin. Her sons were Frank and J.P. J.P. was killed in W.W. II. The girls were Lillie and Mamie Bell. None live in the area.

Mr. Harley Avery and wife, Georgie, who moved to McAlpin when the Crews and Prevatts came, lived in several different farms that he rented for many years. He finally bought a place east of McAlpin. After retiring he lived for awhile in what was known as the Hunt house in McAlpin.

The Avery children are: Emily, Leon, Lawrence, J.R., Hazel, Garner, Inman, Warren, Austin and Laverne.

Leon lives in Pinemount. His wife, Oleta Revels, died a few years ago. His son, Gary, is the rural mail carrier at this time.

Lawrence also lives near McAlpin. His wife, Helen Hunter, was an employee of the school system for several years.

None of the other children live in the area, although some still live in the county.

J.R., Emily and Hazel are deceased.

Mr. Avery died several years ago, but Mrs. Georgia, who spent her last years at Advent Christina Village at Dowling Park, died last year. She was nearly a hundred years old.

#### CROFTS

Connie Croft presently lives in the old Advent Christian Church which was bought by Abbey Croft and moved to the location on the south-side of the east-west road in west McAlpin.

The Croft family moved to the farm that was originally owned by George Hillhouse in the mid-twenties.

Mr. Croft, whose name was George, and his wife, Mary, also had a large family and farmed a large acreage until the children were grown and left the farm. A grandson, J.N. Croft, bought the farm when his grandfather retired.

The Croft children were: George, who married Nina Gaston, Connie's mother. They also had a daughter, Bonnie who lives with her husband L. J. Mobley just east of McAlpin. Nina and George were divorced and he married Mertice Smith. Nina married Percy Bass. She

lives near Connie in McAlpin. George and Myrtice lived in Live Oak. He died last year.

Martin, the oldest son, married Abby Goff, a granddaughter of Anna and Susan Goff, pioneer settlers. They spent most of their married life in the Pompano area. Martin died several years ago. Abbey moved back to the county. She worked in the Live Oak school lunch room for many years. She also attended night school and earned a high school diploma when she was 70 years old. She lives near her daughter, Muriel Dasher east of McAlpin.

Lawrence Croft died when he was quite young. He had married Missie Hamilton, daughter of Toss Hamilton and Sallie Sullivan. Missie died in childbirth when her son "Buddy" was born. She had a daughter, Tassalea.

Henry Croft, married to Mae Lee, is the owner of Suwannee Packing Co. in Live Oak. Their children are: Marlene, who died of leukemia when in her early teens. Carolyn who is married to Wesley Goff and lives in Live Oak. Lavelle operates Suwannee Packing now that his father is disabled. Larry's wife is a Jenkins. He is a long time employee of the local telephone company.

Berna Ruth and Genene, the two younger girls do not live in the county.

Alton's wife is Ruth Bass, a sister of Percy Bass. Their children are Donald and Tommy. Donald was killed in an auto accident. Alton died several years ago. Ruth lives on their farm on 129 about nine miles south of Live Oak.

The only Croft daughter is Ozell. Her first husband was Nathan Skinner. She is the mother of Pete Skinner, former legislator from the district. They also had two daughters, Reba and Averiel. None of the family lives here now.

Nathan is deceased. Ozell is married to Leslie Hatch.

#### VOYLES

Lee and Becky Voyles also left their farm southwest of McAlpin about the mid-twenties. They moved into their McAlpin home and operated a store on the site of the former Brock store.

The Voyles were of the Mormon faith. Since there was no Mormon church in the area, they entertained visiting elders in their home from time to time. One of the sons, Reece, became an elder when he grew up.

Mrs. Voyles was the town's boot legger during the days of prohibition.

The older children moved their parents to Charleston South Carolina where they lived out the rest of their lives.

They too had a large family. The children were: Ida, Ruth, Violet, Pernell, Reese, Talmage, Woodrow and Roger.

## POPE

When the Voyles family moved to Charleston, they sold their store to William Walter and Mary Viola Pope. The store had been rebuilt so that there were living quarters for the family in the building where the store was located.

The tornado that damaged the Crews and Gaston homes flattened the Pope store. It was rebuilt with help from the Red Cross. No one was injured in the event.

Mr. Pope took his own life in 1956. He is buried in Pleasant Hill Cemetery.

Mrs. Pope sold the property to B. W. Deese when she could no longer live alone. She died in 1972.

Mr. Deese sold the land to the community center and removed the building from the premises.

## GRAVLEY

The Gravley family lived in the Hunt house for a year or two during the mid-twenties.

He came here from one of the Carolinas to teach the new growers how to raise tobacco.

He was called a "demonstrator". For 10% of the money received from the sale of a tobacco crop, Mr. Gravley would visit the farm and supervise the growing and harvesting of the crop. His services were not required after a year or so, as the farmers who had grown one crop were able to do it on their own the next year.

## COBB

Bill and Julia Cobb left their farm west of McAlpin after the older children left home and he was unable to operate the farm without the help of "the boys." He moved in 1944 into the house that had been occupied by Mrs. Cobb's sister's family, Becky Voyles. The house is across the road from the Gardner home in McAlpin. His son, Alec, bought the place back a few years ago.

Mr. Cobb called his wife "mama". She addressed him as "papa."

Their children were: Willie, Lonnie, Alec and John, and daughters: Annie, Sadie Bell, Icie, Mytrice and Merle. An older son, Watt, who disappeared and was never heard from.

None live in the area now.



## SULLIVAN

Roscoe and Doris Sullivan moved to McAlpin in 1957. They bought the Will Goff farm and store that is south of the eas-west road and east of the railroad.

They built chicken houses on the farm in 1963.

Roscoe and Doris's children are Robert and Eugenia (sister). Both now live near Doris on a farm east of McAlpin.

They sold the McAlpin property in 1973 to Mr. and Mrs. John Williams.

Roscoe died of a heart attack in 1981, in British Columbia, while he and Doris were on an extended tour of the west and Alaska.

Roscoe's father and mother, Henderson and Bertie, moved from their farm southwest of McAlpin to McAlpin in 1962. They lived in the house that was previously occupied by Lawrence and Juanita Lee. They had previously lived at the McAlpin school as caretaker in 1944. Then moved back to the farm. Both are deceased.

Henderson's father, Bill Sullivan, was also the father of Mattie Gray, Datie Suggs and Tom Sullivan.

Bill married the widow, Addie Hunt. They were separated before he died.

## LEE

Lawrence and Juanita Lee built a house on the Will Goff property (Will was Juanita's father) in the early thirties. Lawrence had formerly lived at Pinemount. They had one daughter, Sylvia.

After the war the Lee's made their home in Live Oak where Lawrence was custodian of the armory.

## FENNELL

Mitch and Julia Fennell lived on a farm in the southeast section of McAlpin from the early thirties until about 1970.

Kanie and Celestia Fletcher owned the farm and Mitch was share cropper.

The Fennell children were Oscar, who never married; Mallory, who married Frances Jenkins and Ethel, whose husband was Leo Vann.

Ethel is the only one still living.

The Fennell family were pioneers in the area. The family farm was in the Emerson Community south of McAlpin.

A daughter, Lola Mae, who was married to Joe Fennell, no relation, lived in McAlpin for several years and now resides with her neice, Ethel Vann. She lived in the Cobb house, and later, the old school house which was owned by Lavaughn Sessions at that time.

Another son, Dewey, whose wife was Callie Hillhouse, also lived and farmed in McAlpin for a number of years during the forties.

Dewey lived on another Fletcher farm in the western edge of McAlpin.

Dewey and Callie's children are: Leander, James Albert, Barbara, Marilyn, Raye, Shirley and Lawanna.

Dewey and Callie are divorced and he lives in South Florida.

James Albert lives with his mother on a farm south of McAlpin.

Henry Fennell lived with his wife, Leona(Shug) on a farm south of McAlpin. Their children are: Mary, Norris, B.J. and Carlton.

After Henry's death in the late 70's, Leona sold the house to her grandson, Woody Greene, and moved to Live Oak.

Mary lives near Live Oak and Norris in Lake City. B.J. is deceased. Carlton is married to Sue Coleman and lives near Live Oak.

Dess Fennell is the youngest son of the Fennell family. He and his wife, Edith Jenkins lives on a farm southwest of McAlpin. Their children are Margaret, Charlene and Dess Jr.

Dess Jr.'s and Pat's children, Dess III and Staci are members of the McAlpin 4-H club. Dess III is 1986-87 President of the club and Staci is treasurer.

#### GRAY

George and Mattie Gray moved from their farm southwest of McAlpin to one on the edge of the town just west of the railroad south of town about 1930.

George was Susan Hillhouse's brother and Mattie was Henderson Sullivan's sister. She had been married previously and had a son, Alvin McCorvey.

The Gray's had a large family. Their children are: Russell, Bessie, Lola, Clyde, Lillian, Thermon, Wilbur and Carlton. A daughter, Bessie, died from burns received when she fell into a kettle of hot lard when she was about five or six years old. People used all kinds of remedies for burns at that time. Neighbors said that they poured ink on the burns on Bessie so that she was black when she finally died. She lived several hours.

None of the Grays live here now.

## VANN

The Vann family, there were several, lived outside the town of McAlpin. Some lived in the Central community.

Pete Vann who is mentioned in the Fletcher family history was the son of Oscar Vann. He has lived in McAlpin for several years.

Wash Vann and his wife moved to McAlpin after he retired. They lived in the Cobb house and later their daughter, Thelma Welch, sold it back to Alec Cobb.

Both are deceased.

Mae Gaston, who also lived at McAlpin, was the daughter of Bill Vann who lived outside of McAlpin.

Mula Mae Prevatt, Vanice's wife, is the daughter of Marshall Ann, one of Bill's sons.

## MILLER

Mr. and Mrs. Tom Miller lived on the farm that was later owned by Mannie and Celestia Fletcher during the early 20's. He operated a general store on the site of the present post office.

Celestia is the only one of their several children who made McAlpin their home. She moved to Live Oak to be near her daughter several years ago. Her husband was an invalid for many years and she took care of him at home until he died.

The oldest son, Bob, taught school in the county many years and also served as clerk of the court.

The other Miller children were: Veatrice, Russell, and Howard and Mouncil. None have lived here.

## SKINNER

Aaron and Bertie Skinner lived in the old Bembry house for many years during the middle of the century.

Their children were: Lucy, who married Vann Jones and Retha Mae, who married Vann's brother, Willie. The sons were Nathan, who's wife was Ozell Croft. Steve was killed in W.W. II. His was one of the pictures that hung in the school auditorium when the school was being used here.

Retha is the only surviving member of the family now.

## SUMNERS

Early settlers in the McAlpin area were the Sumners from Georgia. William M. Sumner and his wife Mary Jane Thompson had a large farm about 1 1/2 miles south of McAlpin. He was a Methodist preacher and a cotton farmer. They had four sons, two lived in McAlpin and raised their families here.

Charles Lawton was born in 1852 and his wife Adell Zipperer was born in 1873 in Lowndes County, Georgia. In 1912 they built their house which still stands in McAlpin. It has been unoccupied since Mrs. Sumner's death in 1972. They had five children, but only two, Gracie and Glen, lived to become adults.

Mr. Sumner was a carpenter and the community casket maker. "Miss Dell", who was a whiz with her needle, finished the inside of the coffin and made shrouds for the deceased. Since there were no undertakers in the area, burial of the dead had to be made in a hurry. Many times the sound of hammering went on all night when a member of the community died. Twenty-four hours was the limit the body could be kept out without "smelling." Mr. Sumner would fashion the wooden box of the best wood available and "Miss Dell" would line it with fabric. The outside would be covered also. Black and gray were the main colors used. White might be used for babies or small children.

While Mr. Charlie and some of the men-folk were fashioning the coffin and "Miss Dell" was doing the sewing, others would be "sitting-up" with the corpse. Each community had special ladies who were called upon to wash and "lay-out" the dead. A wide padded board was used as a "laying-out-board."

Mr. Charlie owned only one car. He bought a new green Chevrolet touring car in the twenties. He took such good care of it that it lasted him the rest of his life. "Miss Dell" was also noted for her practical medical knowledge. She was one of several people in the community who had the ability to cure "Thrash" in small children by blowing breath in their mouth. (Having never seen her father gave her this ability.)

The daughter, Gracie, would have gone to a school for the retarded, had she lived today. As there was no school available when she was growing up, she never had the advantage of attending school. Her mother taught her how to care for herself and household skills, so that she was good help around the house.

The son, Glen, was born in 1912. He and his wife, Marie Carver, bought the Early Gardner house in 1946. They still live there.

Glen worked as an automobile mechanic in a building on the site of the present post office. Later he worked in a garage in the back of Ira Goff's store. (This store is presently known as Eli's). He was the only mechanic between Live Oak and Branford for many years. He had the responsibility of keeping the cars and tractors running during the war.

In 1951 he started to work at the school bus garage in Live Oak. He retired in 1976 after having worked as School Transportation Supervisor for several years.

Marie also worked for the school system as a school bus driver and in the school cafeteria.

Glen is a Baptist minister and has preached at Pleasant Hill Baptist Church since 1969.

Glen and Marie have one son, Ronald, who also resides in McAlpin. He has two sons, Philip and Christopher and a daughter, Ronna, also live there. Ronna is married to Timothy Williams. They have one son, Joshua. Glynnis is married to Bubba Branch. They have a son and live near Live Oak.

Mitchell was the youngest son of William Sumner. He married Lottie Laughinghouse. They spent their early married life on part of the original Sumner farm south of McAlpin. They sold that farm and bought the place where the farm store is now. On retirement, they moved to Branford where they lived until Lottie had a stroke. After he could no longer care for her, they moved to Advent Christian Village at Bowling Park where they lived until their death.

Mitchell and Lottie raised two boys, Gordon and Walter.

Gordon and his wife, Concile, moved to Brenton and have lived there many years.

Walter and his wife, Ila Mae Parker, live in McAlpin where they raised three boys. Their youngest son, Jillard, died a few years ago. Their other two boys, Lemuel and Cleon live near Atlanta.

Walter has been a carpenter most of his life. He and Ila Mae have been active in the Advent Christian Church and in community affairs. Ila Mae is an active Extension Homemaker and both are charter members of the McAlpin Community Club.

Mitchell and Charlie's older brother, Willie, moved to Georgia where he died. His wife, Lola, is 105 years old and is living in a nursing home in Brunswick, Georgia.

Their older brother, Melvin, was married to Oliz Patch. They lived in Denton, Georgia. Both are deceased.

#### WILLIAMS

Newcomers to McAlpin were John and his wife. They bought Oscoe and Doris Sullivan's farm in 1973. Their two youngest children moved here with them, Amie and Timothy.

The son, Timothy, is married to Ronna Sumner and lives with

her and their young son, Josh, in a mobile home on the Sumner property. Amie is married and moved away.

The Williams grow broilers and hay on their farm.

It may seem strange that so much mention is made of farms in McAlpin since we usually think of farms as being outside of towns. McAlpin is all farms except for a narrow strip along the railroad and highway and a small section in the eastern part of town. It has always been thus.

## EARLY YEARS BUSINESS FAMILIES

### LEGGETT

Lewis (Lu) Leggett owned much of the land area in McAlpin around the turn of the century. He sold his home and farm to Jerry and Eula Fletcher in the early twenties. He owned a store on the east side of the railroad and would order a barrel of fresh fish to be sent out on the local each Saturday afternoon. People would stand in line and wait for the train to pull into the station. Many times late comers were left out as a barrel of fish packed in ice will go only so far!

The Leggetts are buried in Pleasant Hill Cemetery. None of their descendents have made their home here.

### LAUGHINGHOUSE

The Laughinghouse family were prominent pioneer settlers. They didn't live in McAlpin but one son, Townsend, operated a store that was formerly run by Lewis Leggett.

Mr. Townsend Laughinghouse bought the George Hillhouse farm and lived there until the mid-twenties.

Mrs. Lottie Sumner, wife of Mitchell Sumner, was a sister of Townsend, as was Julia Goff, Will Goff's wife.

### WILSON

Abby Wilson lived in the old school house and operated the general store which Mr. Leggett and Laughinghouse had owned. The Wilsons also left McAlpin in the early twenties. He became a rural mail carrier at O'Brien where he lived until his death.

### GOFF

As has already been mentioned, Will Goff operated a garage and shop on the store site where Wilson, Laughinghouse and Leggett had their business. Ira Goff, eldest son of Will, operated the shop and store after his father's death.

## SULLIVAN

Roscoe and Doris Sullivan bought the Will Goff store, house and farm land in 1940. They later sold the farm and house to John and Lottie Williams and the store to George Fennell. Fennell operated it for a short while, then sold to Clifton Greene.

"Clif's" as the store was called was the only store in McAlpin for many years during the 70's. The store was operated by Clifton's son, Woody, for a while after Clif's death. When the S & S convenience store opened, the store was closed.

## DASHER

Just across the street from the aforementioned store site, Ralph Dasher owned and operated a larger general store during the early part of the century.

Gladys Starling Murphy (Raymond Starling's daughter) remembers shopping in the Dasher store in 1912. This was the only store in town that sold cold drinks (ice was brought in by train from Live Oak.) She had her first ever milk shake there. It cost 15¢.

Staple groceries such as sugar, rice and coffee were shipped in wooden barrels and weighed and packaged in paper sacks and tied with twine. Articles that could not be bagged were wrapped in brown paper and tied with string. Flour came in cloth sacks and sold for 45-50 cents for 24 pounds. One twenty-four pound bag was the average amount used by a family of five or six each week.

Store keepers bought eggs and chickens so a chicken coop was in back of the store. Farm women would bring a bucket of eggs in on Saturday and exchange them for flour, sugar, coffee, matches and kerosene. These were the main essentials that most families bought.

Corn was brought to the grist mill where it was ground into grits and meal. The miller would take a portion (toll) of the corn as payment for grinding.

The store carried shoes and cloth as well as seeds and farm tools.

## FLETCHER

Jerry Fletcher bought the Dasher store in 1918. The post office was in one corner of the store. Mr. Fletcher carried on the business much as was the custom of the times.

After Mr. Fletcher retired his son, Hal, and son-in-law, Pete Mann, operated the store. The store burned down and was never rebuilt. The grist mill was next to the store on the north side.

## GREEN-GREEN-MILLER & SESSIONS-SCHOOL

There was another store on the east side of the railroad. It was on the site of the present post office. The general store was operated by Preacher George Green and later by Dan Creek, W.M. Miller and Bob Sessions and Mrs. Gaston.

## WEST SIDE BUSINESSES

In 1882, records show that there were two stores and a school. By 1886, there was a grist mill, cotton gin and three stores as well as a railroad station.

A.J. Brinson owned the gin and grist mill. W.B. Reid, W.D. Brown and sons and J.E. Roberts were store owners. Roberts was postmaster and station agent.

By 1900 these stores were operated by different people. J.C. Brock owned the store at the intersection of the east-west and north-south roads. The drug store, run by Dewey Bullard, was next to it. Henry Starling owned the next store and Kana Goff the northern most building. Will Goff's original shop was in the area of the present Baptist Church. The cotton gin and a grist mill were also on this side. The gin was moved to Pinemount and fire wiped out all of the stores at once.

The Brock store was rebuilt and was operated by J.C. and his wife, Cora, until 1922 when they moved to Tampa.

Cora had a millinery store in the backroom of the store. She made and decorated ladies hats. Since the ladies of her day wore hats for all occasions, she did a good business. Some of the more fashionable hats sold for 5-10 dollars. Hats changed with the seasons so women had to have at least two hats each year. Winter hats were made of felt and most summer models were of straw decorated with flowers and ribbon.

George and John Hillhouse operated a store in the same area for a short time in 1914 or 1915.

Lee Voyles and his wife Becky owned and operated the Brock store during the twenties and thirties. Mrs. Voyles was the "boot legger" and provided moonshine for the drinkers of the area. The Voyles children took their parents to live near them in Charleston, . . .

The Pope's were the last ones to operate a business on the west side of the tracks. Business had moved across the street when the road (129) was paved in 1926.

A tornado flattened the store and it was rebuilt and used as home and store until about 1960. Mr. Pope shot himself a few years earlier and Mrs. Pope's health failed so she moved away. J. Deese owned the property and moved the house when the Community Club bought the lot.



P.M. Green and wife, Bessie Goff, owned and operated a large general store about one fourth mile north of the main business section of McAlpin on the west side of the railroad. The building was in front of his house. He sold the farm to P.M. Prevatt about 1917. Prevatt operated the store for a short while. It was used for storage for many years before it was torn down.

A.M. Gatlin owned and operated a sawmill south of the main business section near the present railroad crossing.

#### PRESENT RESIDENTS OF McALPIN

Rev. Leonard Boston

Lives in the Advent Church Pastorium on the site of the former section house.

Mane and Lil Gaston

The Mannie Fletcher home site is where they live. He's a retired sub-mail carrier.

John & Lottie Williams

Own and operate the old Will Goff place which they bought from Foscoe Sullivan. It was once part of the Starling property.

Eddie Moore, Barbara, son Chad

Works for trucking company in Live Oak.

Burt Moore, Deloris and son

Bruce & Tiny Leonard - one son and two daughters  
Live in old Crews house.

Alcom & Gladys Goff

Retired mail carrier - now farms his land - part of Crews place.

Bill & Amie Peters and son Dale

Live in curve at 129 road overpass. He is a retired service-  
man. Works for Suwannee Valley Electric Coop. - she for Westwood  
Church.

Terry & Rita Goff - Alton and Jennifer

Live on old Brock place - operate a farm and broiler houses.  
Alton and Jennifer are members of McAlpin 4-H Club and Country Cousin  
Fair Club.

Cecil and Deloris Anderson

Live on old Kana Goff, later John Goff farm.

Ruby Goff

Widow of John D. Goff who was a son of John Goff and grandson  
of Kana.

Ila Mae & Walter Sumner

Live in west McAlpin on part of old Lou Leggett farm. He is a  
retired carpenter.

Connie Croft

Lives in old Advent Church house on site of former Church of God. He is employed by Occidental.

Lina Bass

Widow of Percy Bass, last section foreman to serve at McAlpin. Lives in mobile home across the road from her son, Connie Croft.

Timothy, Ronna and Joshua Williams

Timothy works with his father, John Williams on his hay farm and broiler houses. They live in a mobile home on the Sumner property.

Glen and Marie Sumner

Live in old Gardner home. Both retired. He is pastor of Pleasant Hill Baptist Church.

Ronald, Philipp & Christopher Sumner

Live just north of Glen and Marie. Ronald works for Alitel, Philipp for a trailer company in Lake City.

Wesley & Annette Putnal & two girls

Live in Flec Cobb home across from Community Center.

Jefferson Anderson

Lives just south of Central States Enterprises.

Marvin Jenkins, Linda and Mark

Retired and live in mobile home just south of railroad crossing.

Daniel Clark, Evelyn, Danielle, Jeremy and Edith

Live in old school house. He is disabled.

Gregory Greek & Janice & son Mark Severence

Live north of his mother, Sadie Greek.

Albert & Thelma Lipp and daughters, Carol & Erikka

He is a disabled veteran. They live on the Preacher Greene farm.

Walter and Pauline Holland

Retired. Live south of Central States Enterprises on west side of the railroad.

Pete & Geraldine Vann

He is a retired insurance man and she is the post-mistress of the local post office. They live in the Fletcher, formerly the Leggett home.

Reverly Phillips - Eric, Kevin, Brian, Kristy

Reverly is the daughter of Pete and Geraldine Vann. She works at Westwood Christian School. She lives near the Vanns.

Ronald & Alice Merrill

Live in house on old Bemby place.

Sadie Greek

Lives across road from old school site.

## CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS

### 4-H CLUB

The first 4-H Club was organized around 1917 or 1918. The county agent and Home Demonstration agent would come to the school and those who wanted to take part would be excused from class to attend. Boys would meet with the agent in one room and the girls with the Home Demonstration agent in another. One of the teachers would act as a sort of adult leader. Many students joined 4-H just to get out of class. The practice of having separate boys and girls meetings was continued until about the mid-fifties.

McAlpin club was one of the more active clubs in the county. For many years the 4-H King and Queen, or at least one of them, came from McAlpin. Some of the better known 4-H'ers were: Marlene Goff, Nancy Haas, Glenda Lee Fletcher, Renda Prevatt, Marcelene Prevatt, George Haas, Fred Gaylord, Tina Fletcher, Aubrey Goff, Gary Goff, Jerry Goff, Shelton Goff, Cookie Haas, Harry Vann, Glenda Haas, John Haas, Kathy Mobley, Kathy Shepherd, Mary Shepherd, Jimmy Shepherd, Donna Avey, Beverly Vann, Teresa Avery and Diana Goff. There were many more. Many of these were state winners in project areas.

Just before the school closed, the club started meeting at night in the school auditorium. This was so that the older members who now attended schools in Live Oak and Branford could take part.

When the school closed, meetings were held at the Community Center.

The club took an active part in building the center. They helped with fund raising activities when the building was being built and have made many improvements through community pride projects. They painted the building outside twice during the twenty-five years and the inside once. They planted shrubbery around the foundation and built the basketball court. The last years' project was the sign that lists names of the organizations that meet there regularly.

Willie Haas has been the club's local leader ever since the club started meeting at night. Her husband, Fred, assisted her until his death in 1983. Betty Hicks also helped until she took over leadership of the Leona Club.

### EXTENSION HOMEMAKERS

The McAlpin Home Demonstration Club was organized in 1936 just after Miss Eunice Grady came to the county as agent.

Meetings were held in the homes and the agent attended all meetings and gave the demonstration.

Most of the members were mothers with young children so the children went along to club meetings too.

Many of the women had not attended high school and hardly any had taken Home Economics, so they were eager to learn new ways. Sewing, canning, food and nutrition were favorite demonstrations.

During the second World War the club discontinued meetings on account of the gasoline shortage. When the war ended, the club was reorganized and named Pleasant Hill Club.

After the new school house was built, meetings were sometimes held in the school lunchroom. The club had worked to furnish the kitchen so that the school could serve lunches to the children. When the school was closed, the county allowed the Homemakers to take the pots, pans, silver etc. to be used in the community center. They were also given the piano and a water cooler and the old milk cooler.

The biggest community project that the club has done is the community center. The club purchased the lot where the building stands from Mrs. Della Coleman for \$50.00. This was in the early '30's. Geraldine Vann, Ila Mae Sumner and Millie Baus were trustees. It took several years for the club to accumulate enough money to start the building. When enough money was available, the foundation was put down. Then with donations and fund raising projects, the walls were put up. Then along about 1960 a determined effort to finish the building was made. It was used for a political supper where enough money was made to do the necessary things to make it usable.

The county had offered to contribute \$300.00 toward the building, but it would have become county property, so the club decided not to accept their offer. The county did, however, agree to use the building for holding elections and to pay rent for the use of it.

After the Rural Areas Improvement Club became established, the community property was transferred to their organization with the understanding that a member of the Extension Homemakers would always be on the Board of Directors.

The Pleasant Hill Extension Homemakers, as they are now known, have been meeting in the community center since it was built. Meetings were held on the fourth Tuesday afternoon of each month until two years ago when night meetings began to be held. This was so that working mothers could attend.

The club has worked closely with the community club on community projects and on maintaining the building. It has also helped the community club with projects and by sponsoring camp scholarships.

1986-87 club officers are: Betty Hicks, president; Gula Mae Prevatt, vice-president; Marty Pugh, secretary-treasurer; and Nance Linkand, council delegate.

#### COMMUNITY CLUB

The Rural Areas Development program was organized in 1957 to initiate a series of action programs intended to reverse downward economic and social trends in the area.

Howard Smith, a Vo. Ag. teacher, came into the county in 1955 to direct the program through the Extension Service. Suwannee and Jackson counties were chosen as pilot counties to try out the idea. The program's aim was to encourage local people to work together to make more effective use of local resources.

The McAlpin club was one of many that were organized in the county in 1959. Meetings were held in the McAlpin school for the purpose of getting the people acquainted with the possibilities available to them.

Officers were elected and the club was named McAlpin Improvement Inc. W.B. Dasher was president and Mr. Russell Goff, secretary-treasurer.

In the early days the club worked on such projects as clearing blind corners on the roads in the community, removing unsightly garbage that was being dumped on the roadsides. The club worked very hard to keep the school open, but were unable to pull this off. It helped with the building of the community center. The establishment of a curb market in Live Oak was also a project. The market is still active. (The R.A.D. means Rural Areas Development.) The name of the curb market still carries. The county dumpsters and the volunteer fire department were other projects the club helped to get started.

In the beginning, special awards were given to the club that showed the most improvement each year. McAlpin won many of these awards.

The club also entered a community booth in the county fair, and usually won first place. This meant that there was prize money of a hundred dollars to spend on improvements.

When the school was closed, the club started to meet at the new community center. Eventually, the Extension Homemaker Club transferred ownership of the property to the community club.

The club still continues to minister to many of the needs of the community. The club building was finished and has been maintained for over twenty-five years. The building is used as a meeting place for clubs and organizations on a regular basis. Parties, showers and family reunions are held there too. The county uses the building as a voting place at election time.

Additional land has been added to the original lot that was purchased and now there is a large playground area and basketball court which was built by the 4-H club as a community pride project several years ago.

The club has honored many of its citizens by planning special events to show their appreciation for their efforts.

Several years ago the club started catering large dinners. This practice still continues and is the main source of income for the club.

When the club was incorporated a few years ago, it became necessary to draft rules and by-laws. It was then that dues were assessed for members. One dollar per family was the first assessment. That has been increased to two dollars now.

Since the school is no more and people of the area attend several churches, the club provides a common meeting place for the people who live here.

All the other Improvement Clubs have long since disbanded. So the McAlpin Club is the only one left. It has made a difference in the quality of life in the community, all will agree.

#### VOLUNTEER FIREMEN

The people of the area have been served by a volunteer fire-fighting team since the 60's. A fire truck is housed at the Community Center.

The volunteers meet monthly at the Community Center. They perform many community services other than fighting fires. They have constructed a mobile kitchen which they use to fry chicken and fish. For dinners the Community Club caters as money making projects. They've earned quite a reputation for their "fried chicken."

#### 1986-87 McALPIN 4-H MEMBERS

Justin Breeden  
Jimmy Bracewell  
Lina Bracewell  
Steven Burris  
Jane Carter  
Donna Carter  
Boss Fennell III  
Lucy Fennell  
Elton Goff  
Jennifer Goff  
Michelle Hoas  
Christopher Hand  
Andrew Ivcey  
Rikke Lipp  
Melissa McGranahan  
Lendi Myers  
Ethan Roberts  
Shley Shepherd

## CONCLUSION

Walpin 4-H Club has generated much interest in the history of Walpin among residents and former residents of the area.

We know we haven't been able to record all of the rich history of our community, but we do know that much more of it will be available to future generations than has been preserved for us, because of our efforts.

We're sorry if some family names have been left out. We got all we could. If other information comes to us, we will add it to our story.

The population has more than doubled in numbers during the past hundred years. The number of residents has been about constant in the past decade.

Business establishments have dwindled, however, so that we now have only one convenience store - S & S, the Post Office, church, Community Center, an unoccupied shop building, and Central States Fertilizers, a fertilizer and grain distribution center. Central States offers a weighing service for large truck loads.

The Community Center has a basketball court and swings, picnic table etc. on the grounds.

On the site where the convenience store and un-occupied shop building now stands, the boys and men played baseball on Saturday and Sunday afternoons in the second quarter of this century. The Sunday afternoon ball games between our team and a team from O'Brien, Madison, Mayo or Perry, and occasionally Lake City was the highlight of the week.

Marion Creek was a star pitcher. Others who loved the game and played it well were: Leon Avery, Lawrence Lee, Hal Fletcher, Martin George, Lawrence and Henry Croft, Dick Creek and Howard Hoff.